

Good Afternoon,

My name is Brooke Kulzer, and I am a resident of the Village of Osceola and newly elected Osceola School Board Member. Osceola is a unique school district with 1706 students enrolled 4k-12. We sit on the beautiful St Croix river and border the state of Minnesota.

As a 2001 OHS graduate, I married my HS sweetheart and we chose to raise our family in the school system we knew and loved. When my oldest daughter started Kindergarten I started attending school board meetings as a way to be involved and knowledgeable of the public school system. It became apparent to me that our school was running a fiscally responsible district that was using some creative financial thinking to solve problems. It became identified that our district would be going to referendum on operation expenses, and I volunteered to help. I researched education funding and learned words like " revenue limits, equalized value and biennium budget" Not bad for an ER nurse.

Despite our best effort, our referendum failed by 133 votes. Following that was a tough time. \$895,000 cut from our budget which equaled teachers, staff, buses, curriculum, and confidence in our schools. Moral was low.

But life moved on, another year started, and eager students started back at the buildings. Our annual DPI report card scores were released, and despite a trying year we scored in the top 5% in the state, the top score district wide in Cesa 11, and our middle school was within the top 10 in the state. And yet due to the revenue limit guidelines imposed post failed referendum, we continued to make tough decisions for kids while making student achievement a priority.

Due to the ongoing unbalanced school funding structure, we continue to be impacted for being a low spending district. Just like other area schools, our enrollment is decreasing. Our Kindergarten class is 106 vs our graduates on Friday that had

150 students.

While I personally do not believe that public schools should have an open checkbook, I think the districts that manage funds wisely should have the same playing field as bigger metropolitan schools.

Let's take the opportunity to correct this skewed formula and do what is best for all students. Local control of tax dollars on education is something that is needed but with fewer restrictions on availability of referendums.

I was appointed to the Osceola School board in June 2017 and am going to continue to fight for my kids to have the same "World Class Education with a Small Town Feel" as I did.

Thank you for your time.

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